

# Wyoming Department of Agriculture

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*The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.*



Dave Freudenthal, Governor  
Jason Fearnelyough Director

July 8, 2009

Lynette Otto  
Shoshone National Forest  
808 Meadow Lane  
Cody, WY 82414

Dear Ms. Otto,

Following are the comments from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) on the environmental assessment to determine adequate domestic pack goat use practices in core native bighorn sheep range of the Shoshone National Forest.

Our comments are specific to our mission within state government: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposal has major impacts upon our agriculture industry, our natural resources and the welfare of our citizens, we believe it is important you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and provide us the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA has signed the Final Report and Recommendations from the Wyoming State-wide Bighorns/Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group dated September 2004 and supports the designation of Statewide Bighorn Sheep Management Areas. We also support the efforts to retain viable wild sheep herds in Wyoming. While we may not always agree with the science behind disease transmission, we will support management efforts to keep wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats separate. However, this does not mean we support the elimination of domestic sheep grazing on public lands, nor does it mean we support the elimination of domestic pack goat use.

Domestic pack goat trips may be one form of diversification of an agriculture operation or a small business for a local family. We strongly urge the permitting of domestic pack goat use on the Shoshone National Forest to continue. Before decisions on this issue are finalized, we encourage the forest service staff contact and meet all past pack goat permittees to discuss their business, their management techniques and their ability to keep their animals separate from wild sheep.

If there are concerns for individuals using goats as pack animals for personal use, we encourage an educational effort, reviewed and supported by the WDA before they material are utilized or incorporated. Educational efforts may include signage at the entry of trails, brochures sent to individuals, feed stores or other locations where goat packers may visibly review the information.

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Domestic Pack Goats

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We thank the Shoshone National Forest Service for accepting our comments and urge your agency to continue to keep us informed of the current status of this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason Fearneyhough". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jason" and last name "Fearneyhough" clearly legible.

Jason Fearneyhough  
Director

JF/jw

Cc: Governor's Planning Office  
WDA Board of Agriculture  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association  
Wyoming Wool Growers Association  
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union  
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts  
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation  
Wyoming Game and Fish Department